

The

Alcester Grammar



M.D.C.

CHRISTUS NOBISCUM STATE.

School Record

December, 1944.

Alcester Grammar School Record.

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EDITOR—MR. V. V. DRULLER.

COMMITTEE—

JOYCE PLESTERS, JOAN HORSEMAN, DOROTHY JONES, SHEILA STALLARD,
KATHLEEN HOLMES, EADIE i, GRAY ii, PRESTIDGE.

Old Scholars' News.

Greetings for Christmas and the New Year to all Old Scholars, both near and far. Some, unfortunately, are so far away that 1945 will be some months old before these greetings can reach them, but it is good to know that the RECORD continues to arrive safely in all parts of the world. And we are pleased to hear from so many correspondents how much they look forward to the items of Old Scholars' News which we are able to collect and how important a link in the chain binding them to their old school they consider the magazine. The editor is always very glad to receive letters from former scholars giving news of interest to their old school fellows.

E. Betteridge, who went to Canada many years back, writes from British Columbia that he is now first officer on a Hydrographic Survey ship of twelve hundred tons. Those who remember his prowess at football, both in the School and Old Boys Elevens, will be interested to hear that the only game he now gets the opportunity to play is golf.

Kathleen Smallwood (née Perks) is still in India. She has promised us an article soon on life at a hill station. We gather from a recent letter that she has not yet recovered from her serious illness.

Maud Brown (née Walker) is a W.V.S. District Leader in an area near London and remarks that she is being kept very busy.

We extend our deep sympathy to Vera Wickett (née Wood), who has received news of the death of her husband as a prisoner of war in the hands of the Japanese.

A recent visitor to school was Lieutenant P. Warner, accompanied by his wife. He was among the early troops to land in Normandy, and was wounded in the leg.

We are sorry to report that W. Canning, of the R.A.F., has been reported missing.

Edna Ison is now a Section Officer in the Code and Cypher branch of the R.A.F.

Another visitor to the school this term was S. Gothard. As Chief Civil Engineer for the Admiralty, he will at a later date be able to tell us many stories of preparations on the South Coast for the Second Front.

H. Sisam was, during the summer, home on leave from Canada.

R. W. Midlane, who is in India, is now Captain, and has been appointed liaison officer between R.A.F. and Army.

H. E. Yates writes from a camp on a mountainside somewhere on the Burma front, hundreds of miles from the nearest civilised life. He says: "Climatic conditions alternate between blazing heat with its consequent dust and torrential rain. A belated monsoon has just recently struck us, and we have had incessant rain for upwards of a week. I live under a tarpaulin, and manage to keep fairly dry; but changing one's clothes is a problem normally involving a complicated struggle in the prone position, on one's bed, to avoid putting one's feet in the mud."

R. Savage, who is an R.A.F. Commando, attached to a Canadian Division, was in France early after the invasion.

Josie Jones (née Lane) tells us that her husband has recently gone to West Africa. Her brother, Morris, is in Belgium.

J. G. Thomas, is, we hear, home in England from the Mediterranean.

J. Ison is now in Italy, from which country we still have news from H. G. Orme.

Pat Midlane and Gillian Spencer are now members of the W.R.N.S., the latter being occupied with radiography.

S. Moore has for a considerable period been in the R.A.S.C., and is now in France.

P. Rutter and S. Snow are now in India. The latter had an unexpected meeting recently in Calcutta with S. K. Walker, who was on his way back to Burma after a course which had given him an opportunity of a short time in the Himalayas.

Angela Jenkins, who was formerly nursing in Birmingham, is now in London.

Back in London also is Margaret Nall, after three months in a south-coast military hospital, nursing Second Front battle casualties.

Betty Orme is now a member of the Civil Nursing Reserve in Lincolnshire.

Blodwen Hughes writes from near London. Early in the summer she attended a lecture in "Social Problems in Education," given by Miss Fletcher, who was her English mistress when she was at A.G.S.

J. Mahoney is home on sick leave from Italy.

Three of the brothers Baylis are at present overseas: Stanley is in Holland; Clifford and Lionel are in Italy, where they have met several times.

S. Ison is a corporal fitter in the R.A.F. (Coastal Command).

P. H. Edwards informs us that he has recently joined the Coldstream Guards.

J. Stewart, who was originally drawn for the mines under the Bevin scheme, is in the Royal Navy (Supply Stores).

G. Collins has returned from Canada with a commission in the R.A.F.

J. Sharp is taking a short course for the Navy at Hertford College, Oxford.

R. Arnold has obtained a cadetship in the Indian Army.

A. W. Brand has completed his training in the R.A.F. and is expecting to proceed overseas.

J. Booker has been for a considerable time in the Royal Marines.

C. Strain is now in the Army.

Mary Clemson is now a Corporal on the permanent staff of the R.A.F. She had the distinction of being the first W.A.A.F. Radar Mechanic Instructor, and there are still only two of them.

R. Price and E. Portman are in the Fleet Air Arm.

Diana Rimmer is training as a nurse in Birmingham.

Both the Jeary brothers are in the R.A.F., the younger being an apprentice.

J. Midlane has recently transferred from the R.A.F. to the Fleet Air Arm and been granted a commission.

Anne Aspinwall is at present teaching in Birmingham; Dorothy Gale in Coventry and Marjorie Crompton at Hitchin.

Edna Simmons, who is assistant in a Public Library, is Assistant Commandant of a Girls' Training Corps Company in the Alvechurch district.

Among former scholars at Universities and Colleges this term are:—*Oxford University*: J. Sharp; *London University*: M. Austin; *Birmingham University*: K. Hemming, J. Buller, D. Yapp, N. Kirby; *Durham University*: K. Wilson; *Nottingham University*: C. Sanders; *Sheffield University*: M. Goodall; *Bingley Training College*: B. Francis and M. Moizer; *Cheltenham Training College*: W. Archer; *Gloucester Training College*: S. Careless and D. Villers; *Norwich Training College*: O. Davies; *St. Gabriel's Training College*: N. Smart; *Liverpool Training College*: E. Henson.

Births.

On March 20th, to Staff-Sergeant and Mrs. G. F. C. MacAlcese (née Connie Sherwood)—a daughter.

On June 4th, to Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Cadman (née Barbara Greenhill)—a son.

On October 19th, to Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth L. Smith—a daughter.

On October 24th, to Major and Mrs. K. L. Clark (née Vivien Wright)—a daughter.

Marriages.

On July 26th, at Hamilton, Ontario, L.A.C. John R. W. Whitehouse (scholar 1934-39) to Brenda Irene Sinker.

On August 11th, at Birmingham, Harry J. Hill (scholar 1929-34) to L. A. Hadley.

On September 2nd, at Bidford-on-Avon, Staff-Sergeant E. R. Hudson to Joyce Winifred Cowper (scholar 1935-40).

On September 16th, at Waltham Abbey, Harry T. Lester (scholar 1916-25) to Vera Gwendoline Alby.

On November 20th, at Alcester, Arthur Payne to Mary Baylis (scholar 1921-26).

School Register.**Valete.**

- *Archer, W. B. (VI), 1938-44.
 *Arnold, R. H. (VI), 1937-44.
 *Goodall, M. E. (VI), 1937-44.
 *Sharp, J. V. (VI), 1937-44.
 *Wilson, K. M. (VI), 1937-44.
 *Yapp, D. A. (VI), 1937-44.
 Allen, A. J. (Upp. V), 1935-44.
 *Bloxham, G. I. (Upp. V), 1938-44.
 Devey, N. S. (Upp. V), 1939-44.
 Freeling, R. M. (Upp. V), 1937-44.
 Hadwen, E. J. (Upp. V), 1941-44.
 Harrison, F. M. (Upp. V), 1939-44.
 Knight, H. H. (Upp. V), 1939-44.
 Lewis, L. C. (Upp. V), 1938-44.
 Mann, B. T. (Upp. V), 1941-44.
 *Prior, E. M. (Upp. V), 1938-44.
 Richardson, Z. M. (Upp. V), 1941-44.
 Woodard, D. R. (Upp. V), 1942-44.
 Buller, M. N. (Low. Va), 1941-44.
 McCarthy, P. T. (Low. Va), 1943-44.
 Coldrick, O. M. (Low. Vb), 1941-44.
 Cotton, M. A. (Low. Vb), 1934-44.
 Elmes, V. J. (Low. Vb), 1940-44.
 Lucas, G. R. (Low. Vb), 1941-44.
 Mereine, W. D. (Low. Vb), 1941-44.
 Faulkner, M. J. (Upp. IVa), 1941-44.
 McKewan, E. A. (Upp. IVa), 1939-44.
 Mereine, M. R. (Upp. IVa), 1941-44.
 Sharp, V. J. (Upp. IVa), 1940-44.
 Cassell, E. J. (Upp. IVb), 1939-44.
 Crisp, W. D. B. (Upp. IVb), 1941-44.
 Haines, D. P. (Upp. IVb), 1941-44.
 Hill, A. G. (Upp. IVb), 1940-44.
 Hill, R. (Upp. IVb), 1940-44.
 Beach, C. M. (Low. IVa), 1941-44.
 Rattue, J. M. (Low. IVa), 1941-44.
 Carlyle, S. M. (Low. IVb), 1941-44.
 Lyon-Smith, E. M. (IIIa), 1941-44.
 Buller, O. F. (IIIb), 1941-44.
 Edwards, A. J. (IIIb), 1942-44.
 Haines, M. J. (IIIb), 1942-44.
 Pumfrey, P. G. (IIIb), 1943-44.
 Terry, J. H. G. (IIIb), 1942-44.
 Tuckey, A. J. (IIIb), 1941-44.
 Williamson, K. R. (IIIb), 1943-44.
 Hay, M. G. (Upp. Rem.), 1944.
 Buller, D. R. McC. (Low. Rem.), 1941-44.
 Follows, J. C. (Low. Rem.), 1941-44.
 Larkin, E. M. (Low. Rem.), 1941-44.
 McKewan, A. J. (Low. Rem.), 1941-44.
 Terry, E. A. (ii), 1943-44.

* Prefect.

Omitted last term.

*Blakeman, E. J. (VI), 1937-44.

Salvete.

- Amos, A. D. (IIIa).
 Archer, J. M. (IIIa).
 Aston, Z. F. (IIIb).
 Bartlett, G. (IIIa).
 Birch, J. A. (IIIa).
 Blundell, G. E. (IIIa).
 Blundell, R. J. (IIIa).
 Bryan, A. E. (IIIb).
 Burden, D. V. (Low. Rem.).
 Burgoyne, H. E. (IIIb).
 Burrows, M. (IIIa).
 Cates, E. A. (IIIb).
 Crow, B. C. (IIIb).
 Cund, M. A. (IIIb).
 Findon, J. (Low. IVa).
 Gwynne, E. M. (Upp. Rem.).
 Harris, M. (IIIa).
 Hewlett, B. J. (IIIb).
 Highman, F. M. (IIIb).
 Hill, A. M. (IIIa).
 Holder, Janet. (IIIb).
 Holder, Josephine (IIIb).
 Hunt, A. L. (IIIa).
 Jaques, B. (IIIb).
 Jaques, V. (IIIb).
 Lawrence, E. M. (IIIa).
 McCarthy, R. P. (IIIa).
 Meyrick, S. J. (IIIa).
 Miles, A. R. (IIIa).
 Mortimore, D. (IIIb).
 Paddock, M. J. (IIIa).
 Parker, J. R. (IIIb).
 Payne, A. J. (IIIb).
 Pinfield, E. M. (IIIa).
 Rosen, R. (Low. IVa).
 Rudland, R. (Low. IVb).
 Savage, D. R. W. (IIIa).
 Slaughter, B. W. (IIIb).
 Smalley, C. D. (IIIa).
 Southwick, M. B. (IIIa).
 Strade, J. P. (IIIa).
 Tarver, G. C. (IIIb).
 Taylor, C. E. (IIIb).
 Taylor, S. M. (IIIa).
 Warburton, R. C. (IIIb).
 Ward, E. A. (IIIa).
 Watton, M. (IIIb).
 Wilkinson, E. N. (IIIa).
 Winspear, G. M. (IIIa).
 Wyatt, C. M. (IIIb).

There have been 365 pupils in attendance this term.

Tips for the Would-be Pharmacist.

Having just completed my first year at University College, Nottingham, and passed the Intermediate Examination of the Pharmaceutical Society, I feel that I am now in a position to put forward some of the views which I have formed during the course. By so doing I endeavour to point out to the future pharmacy student the best way, in my opinion, of taking the whole course of study.

It usually takes five years to become a qualified Chemist or Pharmacist and the course can be taken in any one of three ways. Firstly, one can stay on at school, after Matriculation or equivalent, and take Higher School Certificate, then do three years' apprenticeship and finally attend college for a year in order to qualify. Secondly, one can leave school after gaining Matric., serve three years' apprenticeship and then go to college for two years to take the Intermediate Examination at the end of the first year and the Qualifying Examination at the end of the final year. Lastly, one can leave school after Matric., attend college for one year in order to pass the Intermediate Examination, serve three years' apprenticeship, and return to college for one year to qualify. Of these three methods described, I strongly recommend the first. This I say from experience, as I am taking the course by the second way and have found it very difficult, while, of those who took the Intermediate Examination after coming straight from school, not one passed. By explaining the disadvantages of the way in which I am taking the course, I hope to show, indirectly, the advantages of the first method.

By the time one has arrived at Matriculation standard, one usually begins to feel rather too old for school, and there is a desire to fling open wide the gates to freedom and see some life. That is what I feel like, anyway. Well, I left school and served my apprenticeship with Boots, the chemists, who run a very good Apprenticeship Training Scheme (which, incidentally, is suspended for the duration of the war) which proves invaluable for the final year at college. I then went to University College, Nottingham, to take the course for the Intermediate Examination. The first few weeks of lectures were just a nightmare—blackboards covered with pyes, alphas, deltas and various other letters of the Greek alphabet, which, when put together as

they were on the board, formed the most weird and wonderful formula, each about a yard long ! Let me point out that it was three years since I had left school and meanwhile I had been studying pharmacy from my training papers. There had been no time to revise my General Science and Maths also. To my amazement I found that I could not remember the formula for the area of a circle, the value of π , the formula for simple chemical compounds, etc.—all of which we were supposed to know, of course. The first term was no easy time for any of us who had just finished our apprenticeship and who had been suddenly plunged back into the realms of headaches and wet towels. Not being blessed with brains of more than average capacity, I had to work hard and be content with very little relaxation. Now that I am starting on my final year I find that I have forgotten most of the knowledge acquired during my apprenticeship—which is another disadvantage. However, when taking Part I, immediately after gaining Matric., it often happens that the person is too young to enjoy University life to the fullest extent and is apt to abuse the freedom given in order to lead a gay and frivolous life, while their study inevitably suffers.

My advice, therefore, to anyone at school who is contemplating Pharmacy as a career is to continue at school until they obtain Higher School Certificate and then carry on with the course, serving their apprenticeship with a chemist, or in a hospital where they may be sure they will receive adequate tuition during that time.

Pharmacy is a very interesting profession, and for those who, like myself, are interested in medicine and yet are not attracted by the idea of performing gory operations, etc., it is the very thing. Good luck to the future Pharmacy students !

CHRISTINE L. SANDERS.

Victorian Horrors.

It came to my mind during a bout of belated spring cleaning, that the ugliest things we have in our houses to-day are relics from the Victorian age. I have an inexplicable aversion towards anything savouring of Victorianism, yet it seems to have a peculiar and horrible fascination for me. At present there is a tendency, as is generally the

case when a person or thing has been dead for a quarter of a century or more, to think of Victorianism as not so black as it is painted. This may be so in some respects but our Victorian counterparts seem at least to have been lacking in aesthetic sense, and this seems to have showed most in the way they finished and arranged their homes; and also in the way they dressed.

The Victorians, as a whole, seem to have been commercial to the extreme in their ideas. Their deplorable tendency to overdecorate sprang not from a sincere attempt to achieve beauty, but rather from an attempt to create an impression of prosperity and even opulence. I remember seeing in a well-known art publication a photograph of what must have been the grandfather of all useless and ugly "occasional" tables. It was a very heavy round table, supported by a single pillar, which method of support gave it a most insecure appearance. It was complete with all dust-traps including a be-tasseled plush covering, and carving in the shape of long pendant-like protuberances, dog's teeth, and claw-feet. Underneath was the caption "Art is the concealing of art, but some Victorian art is so well concealed we have yet to find it."—Surely the last and most eloquent word to be said. Not even motives of comfort seem to have inspired the furniture of this time. The chairs were covered with stiff antimacassars and the cushions with steel beads, while the horse-hair sofas caused a younger generation to exclaim, "Now I know why grandmother wore five petticoats!"

The craze for useless bric-a-brac surely reached its height in these years. Let me remind you of a few of the objects to be found in every home of that time. There were those red or green vases with long ugly crystal pendants hanging all round like so many large geometrically correct icicles; there were gilt or marble clocks surmounted or supported by figures of the Three Graces or the Hours; there were artificial flowers, fruit, and even birds protected by that type of glass shade used to cover antiquated wax flowers in grave-yards, and curiously enough, antiquated ham sandwiches in English railway station refreshment rooms. An unprecedented favourite however, was a particular type of vase, which nowadays always remains unsold in junk shops. Its shape bears a close resemblance to that of the fashionable lady of the same time, billowing out above and below a tiny high waist. They are of course, useless as

flower-holders, but make up for this by having so many other interesting features; for example, wreaths of vivid painted flowers often surrounding a little pastoral scene à la Watteau, complete with lute player and panniered ladies, and on each side of the vase an ornate filigrée handle heavily encrusted with gilt. Many Victorian housewives, not content with one or two pairs of these vases, had three rows, one behind the other, on their mantel-shelf, and it must be remembered all the above-mentioned "ornaments" were often crowded together in a small space—a veritable orgy of ugliness. The choicest example of uselessness, however, is a pin cushion I have which was made by my grandmother when she was at school. It is of purple tapestry with bead fringes, and is about nine inches square. Surely ample dimensions for a pin cushion, you may say; but in reality there is not an inch of it which is not embellished by a heavily padded bead flower or leaf. In fact it would not be possible to stick more than two dozen pins in all, into it. Do not however misunderstand me, no one has ever stuck pins in it. My great-grandmother, so proud was she of her daughter's skill with the needle, kept it on her chest of drawers under one of the afore-mentioned glass shades.

Our grandparents also had queer ideas on interior decorating. In a book intended to be read by young ladies contemplating setting up house, entitled "A Bridal Garland," a lady, considered an expert on these matters, writes in the year 1889, "A dark wall is more easy to cover than a light one, and is more becoming to the human face. A light wall looks aggressively bare with only one or two small pictures and brackets to "furnish it." A room should be light by reason of its sunshine, not of cold colours. A sunless room is not brightened by a pale wall." The authoress goes on to suggest a dark red wall-paper with a bold pattern of leaves and flowers as being most suitable!

The pictures which decorated these walls also make an interesting study. If one had "advanced ideas" on art one had Lord Leighton's "Spirit of the Summit," or "Captive Andromache" (Rossetti and the rest of the pre-Raphaelites had not yet found a place in the home). If one was not so advanced one emulated one's Sovereign by hanging a print of Landseer's "Dignity and Impudence" over the piano. Of course if one had a relative who could paint, however slightly, the problem was solved. It is remarkable

how many and varied were the articles Cousin Ermyntude managed to adorn with arum lilies in oils on a sky blue ground.

In this age we have at least returned to simpler things, and a trend towards simplicity we are told indicates a progress in civilisation. We have learned to appreciate "aggressively bare walls" to show off our few worth-while pictures, and we no longer clutter up our surroundings with knick-knacks and what-nots, but then we cannot summon a bevy of starched and incidentally grossly underpaid servants to dust our china dogs and fretwork brackets, as could our Victorian ancestors.

R. J. PLESTERS (VI).

Notes and News.

The Autumn term opened on Wednesday, September 13th, and closes on Wednesday, December 20th.

The head girl is J. Plesters, and the head boy is Hillman. The other prefects are:—*Senior*: E. Rose, B. Adams, Joan Horseman, N. Nash, Burns, Ore, Hancox, Mortimer, Eadie i. *Junior*: B. Black, M. Hopcroft, Z. Mason, D. Bridgman, C. Farquhar, J. Irving, D. Jones, A. Peel, J. Vale, Drinkwater i, Hale, Howie, Pace i.

The Sides captains are:—*Brownies*: J. Plesters, Joan Horseman and Hillman; *Jackals*: B. Adams, S. Rymell and Burns; *Tomtits*: E. Rose, N. Nash and Toye.

This season's football captain is Hillman, and the hockey captain is N. Nash.

Speech Day was Thursday, July 20th., the certificates being presented and the address given by Mr. W. H. Perkins, O.B.E., Director of Education for Warwickshire. As in the previous year, it was not possible to accommodate the whole school in the Alcester Picture House, and forms below the Lower Fourths had to be kept at school, where cricket and rounders were played.

In the final of the Tennis Gold Medal tournament, played on July 24th, B. Adams beat W. Ganderton, 6—0, 6—1.

Burns has been awarded a Worcestershire County Major exhibition.

Owing to the early finish of the examinations—external and internal—in July, it was decided that promotions, with all the accompanying disturbance involved in a crowded school through changes of classrooms, etc., should be made straightway and text books distributed for the new school year. It was thus possible, when the school re-assembled in September, to start work without loss of time.

The book situation continues to be very difficult, though, as the result of early ordering, we have not suffered too seriously. But there are still certain text books that we have not yet been able to obtain.

During the last days of the Summer term, we were able, thanks to fine weather, to play off the cricket Sides matches, and to hold a number of Form tennis parties.

Cricket colours have been presented to Arnold and Mortimer

This term we welcome to the staff Miss S. M. Elphick (Preparatory department), Miss M. A. Evans (Mathematics), Miss P. Flynn (Girls' Gymnastics), Miss R. M. Hicks (English), Miss M. E. Wooldridge (History).

Illnesses of members of the Staff complicated arrangements when term opened. Miss Owen was absent for nearly three weeks, while Mr. Thornton has been absent seriously ill for the whole of the term. To meet the emergency, three pupils who left last term, Yapp, M. Goodall and K. Wilson gave us their assistance in turn before proceeding to the Universities, and later Mr. J. H. V. Booth joined the Staff.

At the end of term we are losing Miss D. W. Owen, and also Mrs. Coomber (Miss E. M. Phillips) who, since her marriage in the summer, has been able to attend only three days each week.

Some changes in Forms have been made this year. There is no longer a Form ii in the preparatory department, and a new Form—Transition—has been introduced between the Upper Fourths and the Lower Fifths.

We wish to acknowledge gifts of books to the library from M. Austin, K. Wilson, W. Archer, O. Davies and P. Welsby; also the gift of pictures for the Art Library from M. Wells.

During the week September 25th to 29th, collections for the Merchant Navy—in connection with Alcester Merchant Navy Week—were taken in school by Mr. Walker. A total of £17 6s. 4d. was subscribed.

Mr. L. Jackson—now a Captain—is at present in Italy.

The second week of October was potato week for the school, and several parties of boys and girls were transported each day to assist local farmers in the work of gathering potatoes. The weather at the beginning of the week was good, but there was rain on the last two days.

Half-term holiday was taken on Friday, October 27th, and Monday, October 30th.

Mrs. E. G. Hunt is this term very kindly giving lessons in glove-making to the senior girls.

On Monday, November 6th the Sixth, and Upper and Lower Fifths were present at a concert given in the Art Room by members of a C.E.M.A. party. The artistes were Muriel Gale (contralto), John Francis (flute), Katherine Moorhouse (cello), and Maurice Jacobson (piano).

The sale of poppies at school on Friday, November 10th, realised the sum of £5 15s.

On Friday, November 24th, a lecture by a lady representative of the Coffee Propaganda Department of the India Office was given to senior forms.

Major S. F. Bates, who is stationed in Ceylon, writes to Mr. Caton, as follows:—"There is a small newspaper, printed in Calcutta, called SEAC from the initials of this Command. On its last page they have of late been printing pictures of typical British scenery . . . To my delight they recently reproduced one of Alcester, Warwickshire, a view very near to and including the Town Hall. It may look a bit prosaic when you see it every day, but it was for those out here who saw it, even if they did not know it, typical Warwickshire, and as such it brought back memories. Ceylon to Alcester is a far cry, and such pictures bring back happy recollections."

At last, after much anticipation and frequent disappointments, the construction of the canteen has begun. During September and October, various building materials were dumped on the premises, and then the first of November brought the workmen. Before many hours had passed a large shed had sprung up on the boys' playground, and the school resounded with hammer blows on galvanised sheeting, as the roof of the boys' cycle shed was torn off. Then a patch of turf was removed from the football field, stakes were driven in and the outlines of the new building were marked out. Soon the foundations were dug out and filled in, and the walls are beginning to rise. Through all this disturbance, Lower Remove are working away valiantly in what has been variously Woodwork room, Physics Laboratory, and Form Room, and is now destined to become a kitchen. We can now look forward with more confidence to using our new canteen some time before the end of the present school year.

The Fires of Life.

Recently the public eye has been caught by resplendent half page photographs of the agricultural labourer's Utopian dwelling to be. Among its many desirable features there are to be electric fires, refrigerators, vacuum sweepers and all kinds of labour saving devices. If these dreams are realised as quickly as the Government hopes they will be I feel that it is time that someone made a record of the quaint, if sometimes inconvenient modes of heating used in the country, and which are so soon to be archaisms.

At present I am fully aware of the inconveniences attached to the existing heating arrangements in the country, such as dirt, smoke, dust and hard work, but at some future date, as I stretch out my feet towards the radiator I shall remember only the picturesque pleasures of the open-hearth. Now, however, the inconveniences of the open-hearth are still fresh in my memory, and these almost outweigh the advantages. I shudder to think of cold and frosty mornings, when one must collect damp sticks from their winter bed of mud before even thinking of lighting the fire. Even when the supply has been collected there follows an interlude of smoke and the application of paraffin until the fire is at length established.

People who are acquainted only with the Yule log on a Christmas card have no knowledge of its realities. Only too often comes the plaint, "No backlogs left," upon which we must turn out and man the cross-cut. Even those who carry a scuttle of coal cannot realise the difficulty of manoeuvring a large slippery log into a suitable position on the hearth. Usually one barks the knuckles in performing a full knees bend while daintily balancing half a hundredweight of sullen obdurate and wet wood at the finger tips. Also an open hearth consumes enormous quantities of fuel and it seems no wonder that country-dwellers have a flair for nosing out wood. I have seen a town person wandering around a field, a forlorn shape in the mist with a couple of twigs under his arms that would burn only for a few minutes, vainly searching for suitable wood, whereas a farm worker can go out and collect a cartload in an afternoon.

There are, however, advantages in the open hearth fireplace. Not for nothing has the legend of the blazing Yule log grown up and the ascetic qualities of a nickel plated radiator, cold even in its brilliance, cannot be compared with the homely blaze which serves as light and heat for so many comfortable farmhouse kitchens. One cannot reconcile the note of popping chestnuts and crisp golden toast with a radiator. Also an electric fire does not include the ingle nook and bacon cupboard, which, when one compares home cured ham with its distant relative, the anaemic, pallid frozen porker, counter-balances a smoky ceiling. Even a smoky ceiling is no disadvantage, for the oak beams of the farm kitchen are improved by several years deposit of smoke and cobwebs.

Another great advantage is easily seen when one considers that ours remains a dustbinless district and therefore the use of a general incinerator where a pair of gum-boots or a dead

fowl can be burnt quietly and smell-lessly is obvious. Also wood ashes form an excellent fertilizer, particularly on a heavy soil, which is probably why farm gardens are so productive.

There is one amusing point in connection with the open hearth, provided by an unwitting author who wrote,

"Cherry logs across the dogs
Smell like flowers in bloom."

Evidently he had never tried burning cherry wood or smoking a pipe, for he would have found that a wet cherry log across the dogs will produce a smell which does not resemble a blooming flower.

There is only one other mode of heating used in the country, besides the famous baking ovens which produce such superior bread, and that is the much vaunted oil-stove. These, however receive far more praise than they deserve. Only by actually possessing one of these instruments can one realise how far a few drops of paraffin will spread, or how much blacker is paraffin smoke than any other smoke.

When one hears of Parisians freezing in their centrally heated apartments which are no longer centrally heated one feels that a word for the open hearth is not out of place, and such are its qualities and its connection with all that is good in the past that as I near the end of this sketch I feel how little I can do justice to its excellent properties. There is something that cools my ardour and that is that the open hearth before which I am now sitting has begun to die down, the backlog having burnt out ; which reminds me that as yet there is no wood in for tomorrow and that I shall have to sally forth in mud and rain with an axe to replenish the supply. The sound of rain beating upon the window finally convinces me that a nickel plated radiator and a little switch have their points

D. H. EADIE (VI).

Suspense.

He gazed fearfully at the head of that great cobra which suddenly confronted him. The cobra seemed to move towards him. So he made one last desperate move. He grasped the dice cup, tossed a six, and won the game.

WAINWRIGHT (UPPER IVA).

Sixth Form Splendour.

Many articles have appeared in the Magazine already about the Sixth form-room, so I hope that one more will not meet with too much disapproval from the long-suffering reader. It is my opinion that the reason for so many articles being written about the Sixth is that by the time the writers reach the top of the school they have completely exhausted their ideas, and out of desperation write about their own misfortunes. One writer called the form-room the "Freeze-box"—this appellation was not an exaggeration; it was an understatement. Although it is only a small and narrow room it has quite a large window, and if one is unfortunate enough to have a private study period in the afternoon one is faced with two alternatives, namely to open the window or keep it shut. If the window is opened, then the victim is slowly frozen to death; whilst on the other hand if it is shut then he is suffocated by the pervading odour of cabbage or sausages, perhaps both.

Until recently the occupants of the adjoining room derived much pleasure from spying upon their mighty neighbours through a peep-hole made in a cardboard square by busily applied compasses. Unfortunately the cardboard was loosened by the onslaught and formed a habit of dropping out, to the intense annoyance of the staff. Now however, the powers-that-be have thought fit to replace the cardboard by a handsome piece of starred glass. How long it will remain intact is an entirely different matter!

I do not want anyone to think I am grumbling, but it is virtually impossible to do any real work in the form-room. Fortunately only the science people have to have any lessons there, but when one of the modern studies sixth has a private study period it is generally found that all the classrooms except one are occupied. Needless to say the one unoccupied is the freezing, draughty sixth form, and it is there the luckless individual must go. The Valois-Hapsburg wars are difficult to absorb at any time, and they do not combine with Latin verbs, square roots or Shakespeare, for although a handsome partition has been erected between the two form-rooms—the Sixth getting only one-quarter of the whole room—the sound waves float merrily through the cracks and crevices to torment the industrious student. Generally two or three are endeavouring to work and after striving unsuccessfully to ignore the lesson next door they start an

argument about the merits of living in Russia, where there is plenty of room, but the conversation can only be made in low tones because of disturbing the staff, who do not take kindly to any interruptions, and tell them wrathfully to get on with some work !

All these hardships, however, are endured with great fortitude and in spite of our cramped quarters we agree that we are lucky to be in the Sixth form room and not in Russia, although it has more room. Besides, if the sixth form-room was all to be desired then I probably should not have been able to find any subject at all to write about !

JOAN HORSEMAN (VI).

The Gypsy.

Over the meadows up the hill,
Through the woods so quiet and still,
Small brown face so merry and bright,
The dark-eyed gypsy sings with delight.

Dressed in colours of every hue,
Yellow, orange, purple and blue,
She walks behind the gypsy band,
Her old brown fiddle held in her hand.

At night they sit by the warm log fire,
And sometimes I hear their gypsy choir.
Sometimes they dance to the gypsy fiddle,
In a circle with brown-eyed Meg in the middle.

When dancing is over they sleep on the moor,
And lying in bed I hear them no more,
But I know that Meg in the heather does lie,
Asleep beneath the starlit sky.

WENDY HOWES (Upper Va).

Lights Up.

I wonder how many sighs of relief were breathed when it was announced that the Black-out was to be partially lifted ? I do not think that anyone had dared to hope for the lifting of the Black-out until the end of the war.

When we were told that we were to screen all lights, we had to scurry round to find suitable curtains or to dye the curtains we had so that the light would not penetrate into the street. After all that we found that shutters made the most effective Black-out for our windows.

When out walking in the Black-out, after it had just begun, it was like walking among the dead. No window lights were visible and there was no friendly guiding light from the street lamps. I can remember that one of the lamps had previously shone through my bedroom window, and it was strange without the familiar shadows it had cast on the wall.

Before the war, I had always taken it for granted that there would be lights in the street. No thought of war had ever entered my head, and I do not expect any of us, the younger generation, really knew what war meant. Even when I heard the declaration of war on September the third, 1939, I was still a little puzzled as to what would happen. I think I believed it would all be over shortly, and that there would not be such German and Japanese horrors as there have been. I should have been annoyed if anyone had told me that England would still be at war in nineteen forty-four.

But in nineteen forty-four a new phase of life began for us. The Black-out has been now changed into the Dim-out. Now the friendly lights are visible once again and the street lamps shine. When out at night now there is not the dull blackness but the amiable lights from the houses and cottages shine out and point the way. This lifting of the Black-out is only another of the debts which can be added to the list of those we owe to the gallant few who saved England in the "Battle of Britain," in the early days of the war.

SHEILA M. STALLARD (UPPER VA).

Christmastime.

Christmas is the season that we long for through the year,
Mistletoe and holy, wishes of good cheer,
Children singing carols, knocking at your door,
Carols through the ages that will live for evermore.

All the world is snowy-white,
Glistening in the clear moonlight.

Children press excited faces 'gainst shop window-panes,
Then trudge homeward with their parcels through the snow-piled
lanes,

Planning where to hide their presents in most secret places,
Anxious beyond measure to cover up the traces;

Longing, yearning for the day
When to show their grand display.

Then at last the great day dawns, dawns so bright and dear,
Everyone is joyful, wishing much good cheer,
Church bells ringing, children singing, singing bright and gay,
Happy is the whole wide world on the great, glad day,

When, so many years ago,
Jesus Christ came down below.

MARGARET NORRIS (Upper IVb).

Dislikes.

I shouldn't like to be a duck, and sleep inside a shed.
 I shouldn't like to be a horse, and have my name called "Ned."

I shouldn't like to be a pig, and live inside a sty.
 I shouldn't like to be the rain, but the sun would be too dry.

I shouldn't like to be a bird, and fly up in the air.
 I shouldn't like to be a fox, and have a burrow for my lair.

I shouldn't like to be a dog, and have to catch some mice.
 But Oh! to be a little girl, it is so very nice.

JOSEPHINE HANCOX (Lower IVa).

Mushroom Elf.

Upon each mushroom every morn
 There sits an Elf, you see,
 And wonders what will happen next,
 Before it's time for tea.
 For pickers come around, he knows,
 And is quite certain sure,
 That his comfy mushroom seat
 Will be a seat no more.

JOAN COLLINS (IIIb).

The Discovered Secret.

"Come on," I said to my sister as she began to lag behind,
 "we have nearly finished."

We were selling flags, a job we had not done before and to make things worse it was pouring with rain. We had visited old Mrs. Smith, who had been very generous and the grumpy lady who said she did not believe in such things. Now we had to go to the house which stood a little way away from the road. As far as I was aware nobody seemed to know who lived there. The curtains were always drawn and nobody was ever seen.

We hesitated before opening the wicket gate, which led into a neatly kept front garden. Then with a stout heart I marched up the path and banged on the door. The door must have been ajar, for it flew open when I knocked.

"Buy a flag in aid of . . . ?" I suddenly stopped. There was nobody there. Then a small voice called, "Come in."

I had the greatest desire to run, but my sister pushed me into the polished hall. The door banged behind me and I jumped, dropping my flags. I turned, but there was no one

near the door. Then with trembling hands we picked up the fallen flags, hardly daring to move in case something jumped out on us.

When the voice called again, it seemed to come from the other end of the hall. As we moved on we noticed a light under one of the doors.

I knocked and the same gentle voice called, "Come in."

We entered into a small room, which at first glance, seemed to be covered with wool. Sitting at a small table in front of a fire, weaving, was, not an old lady as we might have expected, but a small child. By the way she was propped up in the chair I knew she was an invalid.

Seeing our flags she asked us to stay until her mother came in. I was rather drawn to this child, and so we stayed. We started to talk and she told us that her legs had been seriously injured in an accident a year before. There was a groan of pity from my sister but I could say nothing.

Just then her mother came in and seeing the bright face of her daughter she asked us to stay to tea. But as it was getting late and we had a few more houses to visit we left the strange house whose secret we had found.

JANET IRVING (UPPER VA).

Homework.

Arriving at home after a day at school, I look at my satchel, and with a sinking heart, realise that I have not yet finished my toil. I sit down, heaving a deep sigh, take out my books, and wearily commence my night's work.

As soon as I begin to write, my younger sister comes to me, and looking at the pile of books, she quietly asks me if I am doing my homework, a question which does not soothe my feelings at all. Receiving an irritated, "yes," she innocently asks if I am doing French. This is the last straw; I shout, "yes," once again, and she retires discreetly, realising from my tone, that I am annoyed.

With injured feelings, I turn to my books, and endeavour to concentrate on the work in hand, although my thoughts are elsewhere.

After a while my eyes leave the book, and look out of the window, and I think of all the marvellous things I could do, if I was not forced to stay in the house, working with school books. I think of the joy I should have in walking over the

fields, without a care in the world, or playing cricket with the boys in the road, without the spectre of homework haunting me, to drive me sadly back into the house.

This thought brings me back to reality, I turn from the window reluctantly, and with a great effort I once again struggle with elusive facts and figures, thinking not very hopefully, that I might yet have time to enjoy fresh air, after I have finished.

Alas for my hopes, because although I work as fast as I can, it is dark before I have done, and so I regretfully pick up a book, and start to read, hoping to forget my sorrows in the story.

Again I am disappointed; mother begins to play the piano, and as at a pre-arranged signal, my younger brother and sister strike up a sharp quarrel. I struggle on bravely with the book, until father accompanies the piano with song.

At this last insult, I throw the book down, and sulk for half-an-hour, after which I begin to feel better, and so I join in the singing. This cheers me up tremendously, and when I go to bed, I acknowledge to myself, that life is not so hard after all.

GRAY II (UPPER VA).

Olla Podrida.

There are, says a junior scientist, two kinds of Bunsen burner—the anonymous and the nonymous.

He looked towards the east and saw one of the best sunsets that he had seen for years, writes M.B.

G.P. says that Marlowe did not conform to the rules set down by Aristotle and known as the Utilities.

Said a member of last year's Upper Fifth, "Science makes men mere rodents."

"How do iron and sulphur behave in water?" read the science question. "They behave very well," came the answer.

Instructions re fitting iron tyres—"Warm the wheelwright and fit on the wheel."

To see the Sea.

One week in June my family including myself, determined to go to Blackpool for a week's holiday, in spite of the slogan, "Holidays at Home." After the usual rush and scurry of preparation, we set out one lovely morning. We were in excellent spirits and the early morning 'bus arrived almost empty. We clambered in and reached Birmingham in good time.

At the station, however, our spirits sank very low, as we viewed the huge crowds, which were standing about twelve deep on the platform. I indulged in the fruitless hope of thinking that they could not all be making their way to Blackpool. But I was disillusioned when everyone made for the same train. We for our part were not able to find accommodation in it and we resigned ourselves to waiting for the next one. I was very amused to see young ladies being hauled through carriage windows with their luggage following them.

We managed to fix ourselves in the corridor of the next train and eventually reached the first large town where we had to change trains. From here we continued our journey sitting on cases in the small tunnel space dividing two coaches. I must explain that in this tunnel, the motion of the train is something resembling that of a moving staircase, and to keep one's balance requires great skill. We were glad to scramble out at Crewe without further mishap.

Here we waited four hours, staring dismally at each other, our tempers becoming more frayed every minute. At the end of this time there was still no hope of resuming our journey, and by a stroke of good luck we caught a train back home to save spending the night on the station. We arrived home at last after an absence of about twelve hours.

SHEILA WOOLLEY (UPPER VA).

Winter Time.

The trees are bare, the ground is cold,
The outside world looks grey and old,
The thrush no longer sings at dawn,
No poppies bloom amidst the corn,
In places where the flowers did grow,
There is a layer of frozen snow.
But how I like this winter drear,
The snow, the ice and Christmas cheer,
Despite the dullness of this clime,
To me there's nought like Winter time.

CYNTHIA BARTLETT (Upper IVa).

In the Chair.

The atmosphere was warm and stuffy in the torture chamber. My torturer stood over me with a callous smile on his face, his assistants behind him. I tried to scream, but there was something in my mouth which prevented me. One of the assistants turned on a tap, and searing pains went through me, and my eyes were forced to close.

I seemed to be travelling along a telegraph wire, toward a pole. It grew closer, closer, and then I reached it. I saw stars, and felt a horrible pain, but I was forced to go on to the next. After a time this faded away, and a new torture took its place.

A wheel seemed to be going round and round in my head, and growing bigger until my head seemed to be bursting. A noise in my head grew to a crescendo, and then faded away.

I opened my eyes to find the dentist smiling at me and saying, "Will you rinse your mouth out, please?"

PAT FELLOWS (LOWER VA).

King Alfred—A Ballad.

Come, listen, lords and ladies gay,
Whilst I a tale unfold,
Of Alfred, that great king of Wessex,
Who fought the Danes of old.

One day he was a wandering
Amid the forests green,
When there a lowly swine-herd's hut
Down by a brook was seen.

The king was hungry and tired of foot,
And thought he'd there abide.
"Come, sit by the fire and watch these cakes,"
Said a welcoming voice inside.

To all his country's sore distress,
His thoughts were ever turning,
And whilst he sat and pondered deep,
Alas! the cakes were burning.

But when the good wife did return,
Some food and drink to bring,
And found her morning's work was spoiled,
She soundly whipped the king.

ASTBURY (Lower IVb).

Wynken, Blynken and Nod.

Wynken, Blynken and Nod went down a crystal river into a misty sea in a wooden shoe. They had got golden nets to fish for herrings. The Moon asked them what they had come for. They answered, "We have come to fish for the beautiful herrings that live in this sea." The herrings were stars. The stars said, "Cast down your nets, you won't catch us." Wynken, Blynken and Nod turned homewards, tired and content.

You know when you are going to sleep; your eyes begin to start winkin' and blinkin', and your head begins to nod. The wooden shoe is your bed. You might not always dream. It's only when you are excited about something that you dream.

E. C. FINNEMORE (UPPER. REM).

The Garden Elf.

In my garden every day,
Comes a little elf to play,
Running in and out the trees,
Chasing butterflies and bumble-bees.

He rides on the back of a blue-bottle fly,
Under the lovely bright blue sky,
He picks rosy apples off the trees,
Then flies away with his bumble-bees.

CHRISTINE HOWES (Upper IVa).

Oxford Examination Results, 1944.

In the examinations held last July the following candidates obtained certificates:—

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATES.

Group ii (Modern Studies).—M. E. Goodall (English and History).

Group iii (Mathematics and Science).—N. P. Burns (Physics and Chemistry); R. J. Plesters (Physics and Chemistry); D. A. Yapp (Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry).

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE.

*E. M. Black (5 credits); *G. I. Bloxham (7 credits); *N. S. Devey (5 credits); *R. H. Drinkwater (6 credits); *D. Eadie (7 credits). E. J. Hadwen (5 credits); P. D. Hale (6 credits); *R. M. Hancox (9 credits); *F. M. Harrison (9 credits); *G. J. Hillman (8 credits); *M. M. Hopcroft (5 credits); *Joan M. Horseman (8 credits); I. B. Howie (4 credits); *H. H. Knight (8 credits); L. C. Lewis (3 credits); *B. T. Mann (5 credits); *Z. M. Mason (8 credits); *J. D. Moizer (6 credits); *†D. G. Mortimer (9 credits); N. Nash (4 credits); *G. J. Pace (5 credits); *M. E. Prior (6 credits); *Z. M. Richardson (5 credits).

* Qualified to claim exemption from the London Matriculation Examination.

† First in examination; awarded the "Spencer" Cup.

National Savings.

During the Summer term, savings amounted to £6,447 12s. 0d. "Salute the Soldier" week in July realised £6,011, this amount including one large investment.

This term the total up to the middle of November has been £334. So far, fewer fresh members of the group than were expected have come from the new Third forms; it is hoped that there will be a large increase in membership before long in these forms. A number of former members left school in July, and fresh members in this part of the school are necessary to keep up the good record of the group.

Dramatic Society.

PRESIDENT—MR. CATON.

CHAIRMAN—MISS MULLENS.

HON. TREASURER—CLARK.

HON. SECRETARY—E. ROSE.

COMMITTEE—

MISS R. M. HICKS, MR. V. V. DRULLER, J. PLESTERS, E. ROSE, CLARK, HILL II.

The Dramatic Society resumed its activities this term, and several new members were admitted, after reading tests had been held. So far we have been able to hold only two play-readings, "The Little Man," and "Exiled," both by *Galsworthy*. We hope to be able to produce a short one-act play, "The Bull," just before Christmas.

E. M. ROSE.

Scouts.

This term, the troop has been meeting twice a week, owing to an extra period being allotted on Monday afternoons. To make the fullest use of this extra time and because of the increasing number of scouts, the troop has been divided, one half meeting on Monday, the other half on Friday.

Many scouts passed tests for their second class, in the first half of the term, and we are looking forward to having a number of scouts complete their second class soon. During the latter half of the term we have again concentrated on signalling.

GRAY II (TROOP LEADER).

Cadets.

A larger number of cadets than usual left our platoon during July, 1944, and we are in need of new junior members to build up the strength. Sgt. Stewart is now in the Navy, and we take this opportunity of thanking Sgt. Arnold for his services as N.C.O. in the platoon.

One of the important events of the term was the Brigade Parade held in Birmingham. It was a reminder to our own cadets that we belong to a larger organisation, as four thousand cadets took part in the March Past.

The training of the cadets is proceeding on usual lines. Ten cadets participated in a shooting contest, L/Cpl. Steven i winning a bronze medal, presented by Lieut. Hackett, of the Home Guard. We are grateful for his interest in the training of the platoon. An interesting change was the visit of two instructors from the Western Travelling Wing, and the cadets enjoyed their stimulating teaching methods.

We regret the absence of Lieut. Thornton who has been very ill; the cadets hope that he will soon be in good health again.

Eighteen cadets attended camp at Sutton Park during August. The weather was fine until the end of the week, when the camp closed a day earlier than arranged because of rain.

LIEUT. E. W. HADWEN.

Football.

CAPTAIN—HILLMAN.

Although the first eleven has lost two of last season's team this term has been one of marked success. In contrast to the last few terms, the team has now reached the standard which is necessary for competing with other schools. All the matches have been keenly contested, and as the results show the first eleven has been successful on every occasion. This improvement has been due in the main to the much better combination which has been attained by the team.

RESULTS.

- A.G.S. v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (away), Won 3—1.
- v. Bromsgrove C.H.S. (home), Won 4—1.
- v. Redditch C.H.S. (away), Won 1—0.
- v. King's Norton G.S. (home), Won 4—2.
- v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home), Won 6—1.
- v. Bromsgrove C.H.S. (away), Won 5—0.
- v. Redditch C.H.S. (home), Won 5—3.

G.J.H.

Hockey.

CAPTAIN—N. NASH.

This term the First XI Hockey Team has made good progress, especially the forward line, which is much stronger than it was last year. The team now has a uniform of red blouses and black shorts, and has not let the school colours down in the first match of the season. We hope that it will be victorious in the coming matches.

The Second XI has so far played only one match.

The following people have represented the school this term:—S. Woolley, J. Hill, Z. Mason, J. Irving, V. Smith, S. Summerhill, B. Adams, M. Irving, J. Prosser, M. Slaughter, N. Nash.

RESULTS.

A.G.S. 1st XI. v. Redditch C.H.S. (home), Drawn 4—4.

2nd XI. v. Redditch C.H.s. 2nd XI. (home), Lost 4—5.

N.J.N.

A.G.S.

There stands the Sixth so grave and still,
With stately stride and iron will;
Their word is law to all the school,
Who dare question their lordly rule?

There stands the Fifth so calm but gay,
At all their games they seem to play,
With ease and skill of full grown men;
But their form room's like a lion's den.

There stands the Fourth, those jolly boys,
Who think of nothing but their toys,
They bring them to the school because
They think all books are awful bores.

There stands the Thirds; 'tis sad to see
The way they copy you and me;
Their tongues do waggle all day long;
But are they boys who do no wrong?

There stands the school so full of lads;
Before them sometimes stood their dads,
This school I think you're sure to guess,
Yes, that is right! It's A.G.S.

J. R. SANDERS (Lower Vb).